# When Hearts Were True

WILLOUGHBY READE

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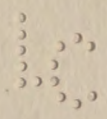
# WHEN HEARTS WERE TRUE

# When Hearts Were True

BY WILLOUGHBY READE

Contains the Stories

HIS LAST SONG
FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES
FOR THE CHILD'S SAKE
THE GHOST OF OAK RIDGE



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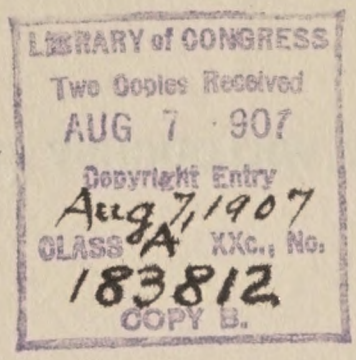


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# HIS LAST SONG

# HIS LAST SONG

The Rev. Robert Walker, rector of old Bruton Parish Church, sat in the vestry room waiting for the last ringing of the bell which would call his people in to the afternoon service. He was turning over the pages of his sermon, when suddenly the outer door was opened and his senior warden entered.

"Mr. Walker," he said, in a rather distressed way, "I fear that we shall have no music this afternoon, for the organist has just been called to his brother's—some sudden illness the messenger said—and the assistant is out of town, as you know. There is a chance, however, though a queer one. I was discussing the matter a few minutes ago with one of the vestry, when a stranger stepped up

and offered his services. He says that he understands the organ, but there is something odd about him which I can't quite make out. Will you see him yourself?"

"Gladly," said the rector; "it will, indeed, be fortunate if he can help us. Show him in please."

The senior warden withdrew and in a few moments returned with the stranger. Robert Walker looked up and saw before him, dressed in a faded, threadbare suit, a man of perhaps sixty years of age. His shoulders were bent; his arms long and hanging listlessly down; his hands delicately formed and thin. Hair, iron gray, falling low upon his neck; cheeks, sunken and pallid save for one bright spot on each which told of wasting disease. Eyes, dark and deep-set, and burning with a feverish light; mouth, weak with heavy lines about the corners; and

over the whole face an expression of unutterable weariness and longing. All this the rector saw in the silence which fell as the two entered, a silence which the stranger was the first to break.

"I understand, Mr. Walker, that you are without an organist this afternoon. I shall be glad to play for you if you will allow me. For years I was organist in one of our large churches, but—I have been ill and—unfortunate. My name—but no matter—I was born a gentleman and am still one I trust, when I am myself, as now. May I help you?"

The rector's warm heart was touched by the simple confession, and extending his hand to the stranger, he said:

"We shall be greatly indebted to you, sir, if you will take charge of our organ this afternoon. Mr. Wilson, my senior warden here, will show you in, and the choir-master will give you the chants and

hymns. After the service I shall be glad to see you and to thank you again."

The stranger bowed, and passing into the church seated himself at the organ and for a few minutes studied the stops and couplers. Then he began a soft prelude which gradually passed into the grander strains of the processional. His touch was that of a master, and the choir, catching the inspiration of his power, sang with unusual sweetness.

Report of the stranger organist had spread through the congregation, and when, the service ended, he began to play a splendid recessional, they remained seated, for never before had the walls of the old colonial church echoed to such music. Then followed in rapid succession several of the best known arias from the oratorios, and, as a fitting close, the old setting of the evening hymn, "Abide with me."

Then the stranger rose and advanced to the reading-desk.

"My friends," he said simply, "I thank you for listening so patiently to my music this afternoon. To my music, I say, and yet it is not mine—it is God's, he gave it to me. It is all I have now, my only comfort,"—his voice grew tremulous and husky,—"for you see I have not always been what I am now. Once I had friends, position, wealth, self-respect. They are all gone now, and my music alone is left. The doctors tell me that I cannot live long—perhaps I shall never sit at the organ again. May I play you, before I go, the tune that I love best?"

A murmur of assent ran through the assemblage, and the stranger, bowing his thanks, seated himself again at the keyboard.

For a few moments there was silence, and then, far away, like the song of some

half-waked bird, the melody began. First, two tremulous single notes floated into the church, and then began a soft accompaniment which grew in richness as the melody went on. A subdued murmur of but half-repressed feeling broke from the people, and then they grew silent again under the spell of that matchless melody.

Like a man who had forgotten himself, who had left earth and earthly things far behind him, the organist played on. The vibrant notes, full of unutterable longing, sang themselves into every heart; for the air, soft and slow and solemn as it was as the stranger played it, was the South's immortal song.

He had just reached the chorus when there came an interruption. A member of the vestry, a wealthy man from the West, who had settled in Williamsburg only a few years before, stepped from one

of the front pews, and placing his hand on the stranger's shoulder, said, in a voice that was heard all through the church:

"Stop, sir! you must not play that here; we allow nothing but sacred music in this church."

In a moment the organist was on his feet, and, as the people looked, he was transformed before them all. The stooping shoulders were gone, the jaw was heavily set, and the eyes blazed with a dangerous light.

"Nothing but sacred music!" he exclaimed, "and what do you call that? O man, man, who are you that you do not know that the blood of a hundred thousand heroes has made it sacred? My father died with its music ringing in his ears. Sometimes I wish I had too; then I should not have sunk so low. Not sacred? Let me tell you, sir, what a generous foe thinks of it. Two weeks ago I

was in a restaurant in the city of Washington. A street organ outside began to play 'Dixie.' I sprang to my feet and clapped my hands. I was drunk, I may as well own it, but I should have done the same thing had I been sober. Drunk as I was, I knew 'Dixie.' They tried to hustle me out for creating a disturbance, but a tall man in a blue uniform sprang up from a table near, threw off two men who had seized me as he might have thrown two children, and cried, 'Stop! Don't you know that that tune is sacred to this man? I fought against his people for three years, and I know what this means to him. Put him out and you put me out first!'

"Yes, those were his words, for though he had been my enemy, he was a man, and he knew what that old song was to me. Not sacred? I played it just now as I always play it in church, slowly, rev-

erently;—now you shall hear it as we used to march to it—to die by it!"

In a moment he was back on the organ bench, every stop out, all the couplers on, and before any one could interpose, the church trembled to the triumphant strains of the old battle-song.

The vestryman looked appealingly at the rector, but the good man said nothing—how could he?—he had been one of Jackson's men.

Gathering power as it went on, the melody swelled into grand diapason, and, as the organist reached the chorus, a wild, weird longing seemed to echo from the pipes. Then, with the phrase, "To live and die in Dixie," their came a low wail of passionate pleading which made the heart ache for the man who played. Again came the crashing climax, "In Dixie's land I'll take my stand"—and

then, suddenly, the music broke and hushed utterly. And looking, the people saw the organist reel a moment on the bench, and then fall heavily backward to the floor.

Almost instantly the village doctor was at his side. Bending down he raised the stranger's head—raised it but to see that the lips were tinged with a dark stain, but to know that death had set his mark on the pallid brow. The minister, coming forward, whispered to the physician, but the doctor shook his head. "His lungs are almost gone," he said; "this is probably the last hemorrhage."

For a little time the stricken man lay there gasping for breath, and then, struggling into a sitting posture, he clutched at his breast. The rector opened the coat and from the bosom of the shirt drew out a small battle-flag—the flag of the stars and bars. The flag was grimed with

powder smoke and dirt, and near the middle a dark stain near a small hole told of the life blood of some hero. The dying man thanked him with his eyes, pressed the flag closely to his breast, and muttered:

"Don't you hear them—hear the boys marching? Ah, there they come! See, they are dirty and ragged and hungry, but they'll follow Marse Robert to the end. There comes the flag—my father's flag—he wrapped it round his body to bring it from the field—but—they shot him—here—for Dixie."

The word seemed to bring back the music he had just been playing, for in a poor quavering voice he began to sing:

"'Away — away — away — down — south—'"

The blood rose to his lips and choked him, but after a moment, he went on again:

"'In Dixie's land—I'll take—my—stand—To live—'"

The minister bent forward and covered the dead face with the flag. "And die," he added softly, "in Dixie."

# FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

## FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

It was down at the ferry that Uncle Jack told me the story, and I write it just as it fell from his lips, in that broken, drawling tongue which, in these days of education for the negro, is fast becoming but a memory in the South; in the tongue which we grown-up children love so well, for it brings back to us the voice of our dear old black mammy as she sang us to sleep, years ago, down on the plantation by the James.

We had been friends for a long time, Uncle Jack and I, for I had frequently crossed the river by his ferry on my way to a lower plantation in which I had acquired an interest. From time to time, as we slowly crossed the sluggish water, he had unfolded to me bits of family history, until I really seemed to know "de

Marster," "Marse Frank" and "Miss Katie," and so it happened that one day, having time to spare, I asked him to tell me their story.

"Well, seh," he said, "I nuver wuz much at talkin', fo' I ain' got de gif' laik some o' dese hyah free-issue niggers whah go to school an' git so smart dat dee cyahn' do nuttin' but set 'roun' an' 'spute 'bout things dat none o' dey business; but ef yo' willin' to resk me, I'll do meh bes' to tell yo' 'bout de fambly."

We seated ourselves on a log, and after a few minutes of silence and a preparatory scratching of his almost bald head, he began:

"Yo' see, seh, I'se too ole to wuck reg'lar now, an' so I jes' lives up at de place, an' durin' de good wedder I runs de boat hyah fur what I kin meck. 'T ain' dat de Marster an' Marse Frank oon' teck keer o' me dough, fur dee gi'

me all I wan', an' is glad to, dee say; but I don' laik to 'pen' on dem when I kin wuck some fur mehse'f. De day wuz, dough, dat I could plough wid de bes' o' de han's an' use' t' lead de urrs so fur wid a cradle dat dee say, 'fo' Gawd, dee b'lieve I wuz med o' iron.

"We-all's plantation wuz de bigges' an' de bes' in de county, an' dyah wuz mo' 'n three hund'ed niggers residin' dyah. Some of 'em wuz lazy an' wuthless but dee all love de ole Marster, 'ca'se he ain' nuver sell 'em off de place, an' ain' nuver let de overseer whup 'em; an' den dee hed plenty t' eat an' a good place to sleep, an' yo' know, seh, dat go long way wid a nigger.

"De ole Marster come f'um Richmon' an' settle hyah 'long 'bout eighteen twen'y. Not long after dat Marse Torm an' me wuz interjuced to de worl', bein' bo'n on de ve'y same day, an' dyah wuz

much rejoicin' at de gre't-house at de 'vent. Dat boy sut'n'y wuz a fine one wid black hyah an' eyes, an' ole Marster set a heap o' sto' by 'im. He wen' up straight ez a poplar, an' by de time he wuz twen'y-one he wuz de ole Marster all over ag'in. Yo' see hit lay in de blood—he teck after he pa jes' laik de shoot teck after de tree whah yo' done cut down. He had all he pa's ways, too, an' when he meck up he min' dyah warn' no reasonmunt in de worl' could change 'im. So hit come dat de ole Marster tu'n de place over to him to teck keer on, while he jes' set back crossleg an' repose he min'.

"Dee los' de nex' two chillun, so dat Marse Torm wuz de onlyes' chile till 'bout twen'y y'ars befo' de wah, an' den Miss Gracie wuz bo'n long in de spring. De ole Mistis nuver wuz well after dat, but jes' go long gittin' thinner an' whiter

till she tuck to her baid. Dee done all dee could but 't warn' no use, she die de day after de nex' Chris'mus. De ole Marster mos' 'stracted, an' ef de chile hed die too, I 'spec' he'd er los' he min'; but de baby grow an' th'ive an' he try to 'sole hese'f wid her.

"Jinny,—she wuz meh wife, seh, an' hed bin de ole Mistiss's maid fur y'ars,—she wuz de chile's mammy an' she nuss 'er at 'er own breas'. We hed been ma'yed two y'ar den an' Jinny hed a gal o' 'er own, but I do b'lieve she love Miss Gracie de bes'. An' I don' blame er', 'ca'se dat black little nigger wuz de uglies' chile I uver see. Gawd knows w'y she ain' better lookin' fo' 'er mammy wuz one o' de purties' gals in de county, an' 'ristocratic lookin' fur a nigger; an' 'er daddy—dat me—well, Jinny of'n say dat ef I wuz ez good ez I wuz good lookin' I'd er been a angel on uth, an'

Jinny nuver wuz much fur flatterin' folks—leas' of all me—dat is after we wuz ma'yed. I selec' Jinny fum de res' de gals fur 'er sweet ways, but after de weddin' dee clabber quicker dan milk in a thun'er storm.

"We name Jinny's chile 'Lilah, after dat 'ooman in de Bible whah 'ceive Sampson, 'cause she hed 'ceive us so 'bout 'er looks. Why, seh, her mouf so big dat ef 'er y'ars hed n' dam hit up, de top o' 'er haid would er been a islan' w'en she yell!

"Marse Torm, he jes' woun' up in he little sister. He cyah her roun' an' pet an' coddle 'er, an' in de warm evenin's he set on de gret po'ch wid her in he ahms an' watch 'er while she sleep. An' ez she grow up he l'arn 'er to talk, an' he call 'er li'l' sweetheart an' tell 'er how he love 'er. An' she foller 'im roun' laik a dawg, an' call 'im 'er 'Daddy Torm,'

an' I b'lieve she love 'im better dan she did 'er pa.

"'Bout dat time 't wuz dat Marse Torm met Miss Emma. Yo' see he wuz 'vited down to spen' Chris'mus at ole Cap'n Nelson's whah live 'bout thirty mile below we-alls. Miss Emma wuz de Cap'n's onlyes' chile, an' Marse Torm hedn' see 'er fur y'ars 'cause de Cap'n hed been travel'in' wid 'er 'broad fur he health. In course I recompany Marse Torm, an' we rid down dyah de week befo' Chris'mus.

"Well, dee hed gre't times fur de nex' ten days er sich a matter; in de mawnin' dee 'd go fox-huntin', er mebbe 't wuz deah, an' git back to dinner 'bout dark; an' after dat dee play kyahds an' dance an' set 'roun' in de cornders an' talk—dat is, de young ones whah wuz laikin' one nurr would. White folks don' meck love laik niggers yo' know, seh; black

gal she to'ment yo' by tellin' yo' dat she ain' bodderin' her haid 'bout yo', dat she a'ready got six niggers jes' honin' fur 'er, while de truth is, laikly, she ain' got but de beah yo'; but white lady she sw'ar she ain' got nobody to mediate 'pon skusin' o' yo,' when she ve'y laikly 'gaged to three four urrs right dat minute. Den, too, nigger got to pick he chance to talk sweet to he gal, fo' she ain' alluz ready to listen laik white lady. W'y, seh, ef a nigger tell he Junie dat he heart gwine pit-pat fur 'er while de fiddler playin' 'Go down, Moses,' ez I see one o' de young white gen'muns do one night to he lady,—I know 't wuz som'n laik dat, her face blossom so,—she tell 'im he better put dat pit-pat in he foots an' not bodder her, she warn' dance.

"I tuck p'tic'lar noticement o' de fac' dat Marse Torm alluz hangin' roun' Miss Emma an' dat he edmirin' 'er mightily

wid he eyes, jes' laik a hongry houn' whah lookin' at a piece o' ven'son dat hangin' higher dan he kin jump. But she not one o' de kin' whah 'vites yo', 't all; she sort o' stand 'im off an' projic' wid 'im, an' I b'lieve dat meck 'im wuss. I notice dat mens alluz 'preciates oomens mo' when dee don' meck deese'fs too plenshus. An' when de day come fur us to return home, an' dee hed all shuk han's dyah on de gre't po'ch an' said, 'Er Happy New Y'ar,' Marse Torm linger to de ve'y las' wid Miss Emma, an' keep tellin' 'er how he had 'joyed hese'f an' dat hit sut'n'y wuz a ve'y fine day.

"Marse Torm nuver pay no 'tention to de ladies befo', an' so when he tell de ole Marster dat night at supper all 'bout de visit an' meck sich special mention o' Miss Emma, he pa sort o' laugh an' say, 'Yo' 'peah to be ve'y fon' o' Emma'; an' Marse Torm 'spon' dat he do laik 'er ve'y

much, an' I think dat hit done pas' likin', but I ain' say nuttin'. 'T wuz sca'cely a week befo' Marse Torm wuz back at Cap'n Nelson's, an' he stay so long dat de ole Marster say to me one day, 'Jack, we mout ez well git ready fur a weddin', dyah gwine be one soon.' An' so 't wuz. Marse Torm kep' ridin' back an' fro fur 'bout three mon's, an' den hit wuz 'nounced dat dee wuz to be ma'yed in de spring.

"When de time come we all rid down to 'De Oaks,'—dat wuz de name o' Cap'n Nelson's place,—an' dyah we sojourn fur a week. Marse Torm 'low dat he nuver see de time dreg so, an' he ax me did de days seem so long to me jes' befo' I wuz ma'yed to Jinny. I say no, but dat dee hed dreg mightily sence. But at las' de night come. Dee druv to de chu'ch, whah dee hed done fix up laik a flower gyahd'n, an' Miss Gracie walk in befo'

Miss Emma an' drap flowers on de flo' fur her to step on, an' den Marse Torm come out de dressin'-room an' met 'er at de railin'. Hit ermin' me o' de day dat ole 'Lijah pernounce dat Jinny an' me wuz man an' wife, an' I jes' hope dat Marse Torm hed use' better jedgment dan I hed exercise'. Den he teck 'er han' an' wed 'er wid de ring an' promise to teck keer uv 'er alluz, an' den dee walk out an' we come back to supper.

" 'Long dat summer ole Marster tuk de fever. Miss Emma nuss' 'im faithful, but he git wuss an' wuss an' talk right 'stracted. Den dyah come a evenin' when de fever had done lef' 'im, an' he open he eyes an' say, 'Whah Gracie?' Dee brung 'er in an' she climb up on de baid an' put 'er ahms roun' he neck an' kiss 'im. Den he say, 'Sen' Torm hyah an' yo'-all go out.' So dee did, an' Marse Torm wen'

in an' stay a long time, an' when he come out he had Miss Gracie in he ahms an' wuz cryin'. Well, seh, 'bout a week er sich a matter after dat, de ole Marster die an' we bury 'im in de graveyard down at de chu'ch yawnder by de river.

"Things wuz mighty sad up at de gre't-house den till 'long in de nex' summer, an' den dyah come er addition to de fambly. Hit wuz a leetle gal an' dee call 'er Katie after 'er gran'ma, dee ole Mistiss. Marse Torm,—he wuz de Marster now,—he 'vide he 'tention 'tween Miss Gracie, who wuz now 'bout seven, an' de baby. He love he own chile, co'se he did, but I b'lieve he love Miss Gracie jes' ez much.

"Dyah's nuttin' to tell, seh, 'bout de nex' ten er twelve y'ars, fo' ev'ything wen' on quiet an' peaceful 'cepin' dat Jinny git mo' savigrous ev'y day. Den 'bout two y'ars befo' de wah begin, de Pres'dunt

'p'int de Marster to go 'broad. Miss Katie wuz growed up a fine chile by dis time, an' Miss Gracie, she young lady an' hed done been Richmun' to school. She hed de purties' voice dis nigger uver heah; Gawd, seh, she could jes' natchelly beat a mockin'-bu'd! Now I don't know nuttin' 'bout music—dat is de kin' in de books—Jinny say I ain' got no y'ar, an' when I 'spon' dat hers big 'nough fur bofe uv us, she git mad, an' I hev to dodge de skillet whah she fling at meh haid. But 'tis jes' dat way; I cyahn' tell 'S'wanee River' fum 'Ole Jim Crow,' an' ef I wuz to try dat chune dee call de 'Ole Hund'ed' I know I oon' git pas' fifty er sixty noways.

"One night I heah Miss Gracie singin' som'n' 'bout,

" 'A prince am comin', am comin' fur me;
To teck me 'way to he home 'cross de sea";

an' I think dat hit would hev to be a

king, let 'lone a prince, befo' de Marster 'd let 'er go.

"Dee wuz packin' up an' fixin' to start fur nyah 'bout two mon's, fo' de Marster gwine teck de Mistiss an' Miss Gracie an' Miss Katie wid 'im, an' yo' know, seh, dat de gittin' ready is de bigges' paht de trip whah oomens is int'rusted. I wuz to drive 'em ez fur ez Norfolk, whah dee wuz to tek de boat fur New Yawk, an' I wuz jes' ez 'cited ez a dawg whah got a coon in a holler lawg whah he cyahn' git to, 'cause I nuver hed been down to de city.

"I wuz plunderin' 'round' fur sev'rul days befo' dee go, gittin' meh clean clo'es fix', an' I wuhy Jinny so 'bout de sewin' an' all, dat she say I wuss dan one o' dese Jack-in-de-boxes whah de chil'n git in dey stockin' Chris'mus, an' dat she know ef I uver git to heav'n,—which she doubt, she say, 'cause I ain' chile-laik 'nuff laik

she, an' patient an' long-sufferin',—I oon' sit still long 'nuff to heah de roll-call an' know wherr I a lamb er a goat.

"De evenin' befo' we start de Marster say to me, 'Jack, hyah a suit o' sto' clo'es fo' yo' to weah on de trip; yo' better go an' try ' em on.'

" 'Thank yo' Marster,' I say, an' den I go back to meh cabin an' Jinny she dress me up, an' when she finish pinnin' on dat high collar I hed borrer f'um de Marster fur de recasion, an' tyin' on a blue cravat dat she had meck f'um a piece o' one o' Miss Emma's ole dresses, she 'clar' dat I look ve'y well fo' me, an' dat I mought be thankful dat a gal wid sich good tas' had descended to ma'y me. Dat ooman wuz alluz throwin' som'n' up to me 'bout how s'perior she wuz to 'er husban;—dat me—an' I alluz took hit quiet-laik, 'cause I didn' warn' hev no disruptionment in de fambly. Dee say dat Job wuz try' in

ev'y way to tes' he patience, *but he never ma'yed to Jinny.* I look in de glass an' I 'clah I ain' know wherr dat me or some strange gen'mum, I look so fine. Dese hyah preachers need n' tell me dat clo'es don' meck no diff'ence s'long ez a man's hones'—dee do, an' a big one at dat.

"We start de nex' mawnin' an' two days after dat we gits to Norfolk. I nuver did see so many houses togerr befo' seh, an' some of 'em bigger dan de gre't-house on de plantation. I stay close to de Marster, fo' I did n' warn' dit los'; an' he laugh an' ax me how I laik de city. I tell 'im dat hit wuz too crowded to suit me, but dat I feel ve'y free widout Jinny.

"Dyah wuz a mighty laikly lookin' yaller gal in de hotel whah we stay—she wuz one o' de chahmber-maids, she say, an' a free nigger—whah kep' cyahstin' 'er eyes todes me, fo' she see dat I b'long to a gen'mum an' wuz high up in s'ciety, ef I

did live in de kentry. I sort o' wink back at 'er an' pres'n'y she come over to wyah I wuz settin' by de fyah in de kitchen, an' she say, 'Howdy? Am dis yo' fus' visit to de city, seh?' She so perlite I mought er knowed she warn' hones', but I ain' notice dat den; an' ez I did n' warn' 'er to think I nuver been out de ole county befo', I say, ve'y high-tone', 'Yes, to *dis* city.' Dat wuz de beginnin', an' 'long 'bout midnight she hed promise to ma'y me, an' I hed meck her b'lieve I hed nuver love no one 'skusin' o' her—which I hed n' sence Jinny ma'yed me. Den she say we seal de cawntrac' wid a kiss, an' we seal hit sev'rul times. De een' wuz dat de next day when I go to ontie meh handkercher whah I hed six dollars tie up in fur de trip, whah I hed meck by extra wuck, de handkercher an' de six dollars wuz bofe missin', an' den I 'membered how close dat gal hed sot to me, an' I

knowed dat she wuz at dat time 'joyin' de results o' meh hard wuck, an' dat what I git fo' foolerin' wid one o' dem city gals. An' don' yo' know, seh, when I require fo' 'er, I fin' dat she hed departured y'arly dat mawnin', an' hed lef' her love fur me—de imperdent piece—dough I notice she ain' lef dem six dollars.

"On de comin' Thursday evenin' de folks lef'. I wen' down to de boat wid 'em, ridin' in front de kerridge wid de driver, an' I jes' wish dat Jinny could see 'er husban' spreadin' on style. Jes' befo' dee go 'board, de Marster gi' me a piece o' paper whah say I dyah wid him on business an' not a run'way, an' he tells me to start back home dat evenin' an' to teck keer de place while he gone, an' I see de teahs in he eye. I sort o' choke, mehse'f, ez de boat move off, de ladies wavin' dyah handkerchers an' callin', 'Goo'-by, Unc' Jack.'

"I gits home safe two days arfter, an' I wuz powerful glad to see de ole place ag'in, fo' I wuz tired o' travelin' roun' an' seein' de sights, an' den too dat collar hed wuhy me mightily. I recount to Jinny an' all de niggers what I hed see an' a good many things I ain' see, 'cause I know dee b'lieve all I tell 'em,— niggers allus does,— 'cep'n I didn' think hit wuth while to mention dat gal whah hed purloin' meh six dollars. Dem niggers' eyes mos' pop when I tell 'em 'bout meh drivin' 'roun' de city to teck in de sights, an' fum dat day I wuz de bigges' man on de plantation, an' even Jinny edmire me mo' dan she uver hed.

"Ev'ythin' wen' on quiet den fur 'bout two y'ars, de Marster writin' dat dee all doin' fine an' hopin' we wuz de same, till one day Mister Brady, he wuz de overseer, come down to de fiel' whah I wuz layin' by co'n, an' say dyah wuz a wo',

an' dat de Yankees say dee comin' down hyah to fight we-all an' to set de folks free. I ax 'im what de name o' Gawd we gwine do when we free, an' I 'spressify to him dat we doin' ve'y well whah we wuz, but he say he don' know nuttin' mo' but what he had done respon' to me. Den 'bout six weeks after Ferginia secede, dyah come a letter fum de Marster sayin' he hed done resign' he place an' wuz comin' home torectly. Suah 'nuff, 'long in de summer hyah dee come, lookin' jes' de same ez when I lef' 'em, 'cep' dat Miss Katie hed growed up mos' a young lady, an' wid 'em come two gen'muns, Cun'l Hargrove, an' he son Frank, who wuz 'bout seventeen. Dis hyah Cun'l Hargrove, de Marster tell me, hed b'long to de ahmy whah he live, but he hed done sell out an' wuz gwine settle in Ferginia. He wuz a ve'y fine-lookin' man, he wuz, wid he curly brown

hyah an' he long moustahsh, an' de Marster seem to be ve'y fon' of 'im. Hit come out den dat he wuz 'gaged to Miss Gracie, 'cause he wife been daid a long time. Miss Gracie mighty proud of 'im, an' look at 'im kin' o' rev'rent-laik, an' say he de bes' man in de worl' 'cep'n' her big Daddy Torm. An' so de song she sing dat night 'bout de prince tu'n out true—on'y hit wuz a Cun'l.

"De Marster say he gwine in de ahmy, an' dough Miss Emma do 'er bes' to 'suade 'im outn he notionment, hit ain' no use. De Cun'l say dat he gwine in too, but dat he mus' be ma'yed fust, so dee don' wait to hev de weddin' in de chu'ch, but jes' 'vites a few frien's, an' Mis'er Walker come an' ma'y 'em in de parlor front de big mirrer. De Marster say, 'I do,' when de preacher ax, 'Who give dis ooman to dis man?' an' I notice 'im lay he han' on de big fambly Bible whah layin'

on de table by 'im, 'an' he lips move laik he talkin' to hese'f.

"De Cun'l an' Miss Gracie wen' to Richmun' fur a week er two, an' dat night de house mighty quiet. Miss Emma, she layin' down wid a headache fur company, an' Miss Katie an' de Marster in de settin' room. De do' 'twix' dat an' de dinin'-room, whah I wuz layin' de table, wuz open, an' I heah 'im say, 'Chile, yo' hev nuver heah why I love yo' Aun' Gracie so. Now I gwine tell yo'. Jes' befo' yo' gran'pa die he sen' fur me an' tell me he warn' me to promise 'im to teck keer o' he li'l' gal alluz, an' to swah to 'im dat I kill anybody whah hu't 'er. I swo' to 'im dyah wid meh han' restin' on 'er haid, an' to-day, when de preacher ax Cun'l Hargrove would he purtec' an' keep 'er alluz an' he say, "I will," I jes' say to mehse'f, "Yes, an' ef yo' don' I kill yo'."

Now run 'way to yo' murr, chile, I warn' think'.

"A few days after Miss Gracie an' de Cun'l come home, him an' de Marster wen' off to Richmun'. Miss Emma an' Miss Gracie mos' cry dey eyes out fur 'while, but 't ain' no use, an' bime-by dee settle down to pickin' lint fur de hospitals an' fixin' things fur de soldiers. Dem wuz a bad fo' y'ars, seh, 'specially after de folks wuz sot free, an' de mens stray off an' de Yankees begin to git closer an' closer.

"'Bout a y'ar befo' de s'render Marse Frank say he gwine in too; dat he wuz ole 'nuff an' dat dee need mens. But de Mistiss tell 'im dat dee wuz so lonely an' unpertected, an' de Yankees gittin' so close, dat she think he better come over to we-all's an' teck keer o' dem. De Cun'l hed done buy de nex' place an' Marse Frank hed been wuckin' hit an' tryin' to

git hit fix up; but he say de place kin run hitse'f an' dat he'd come. An' he did teck keer of 'em, 'specially o' Miss Katie; but den she de younges' an' of co'se need hit de mos'.

"Den de Marster got wounded so bad dat he hed to come home to git nussed. He wuz shot in he laig an' hit wuz six mon's befo' he git up an' go cripplin' 'roun' on he crutches. One day while he still in he baid, three mens come ridin' up to de gate an' hitch dey horses, an' den walk up to de do' an' knock. Marse Frank met 'em an' ask 'em what dee warn'. Dee look s'prise' to see a man laik him dyah, fo' mos' all our mens wuz in de ahmy, but one of 'em say:

" 'We warn' de ole rebel Major whah hyah.'

" 'Well, yo' cyahn' git 'im', say Marse Frank.

" 'Who gwine stop us?' de man say ve'y bol'.

" 'I is,' Marse Frank say; an' befo' dee know what he 'bout he done t'row two long pistols in dey faces, an' he say:

" 'Now git out o' dis, an' ef yo' come back hyah I'll kill yo'!' An' dee git on dey horses an' ride off, jes' in time too, fur some o' we-all's mens comes up torectly an' says dat dee hed p'tic'lar bus'-ness wid dem gen'muns, ez dee wuz spies an' bushwhackers.

"Miss Katie, she standin' back in de hall lis'nin' all de time, an' when de 'cite-ment hed subside' hits'ef she wen' right up to Marse Frank an' she say:

" 'Yo' is de braves' man in de worl', I think!' an' she hol' out bofe her han's to 'im. He teck 'em studdy an' say:

" 'I'd die to teck keer o' yo', Katie, I love yo' so; will yo' le' me try to alluz?'

An' she say, 'Yes,' an' de bus'ness wuz done.

"Den Gen'l Lee s'render an' de Cun'l come home. He look bad, seh; he face ve'y raid an' he talk loud an' act ve'y rough sometimes. Him an' Miss Gracie go back to dey place an' Marse Frank go wid 'em. Den tales got out ez how de Cun'l hed tuck to drinkin', an' dat he go 'way fum home an' stay sometimes, an' nobody know whah he at, an' dat dyah wuz a lot o' city mens up to he house constant. De Marster didn' heah 'bout it 't all fo' nobody gwine tell *him,* an' he laig ain' well 'nuff yit fur 'im to ramble 'roun' an' see fur hese'f. I wuz up dyah sometimes, an' I feel mighty sorry fur Miss Gracie, fur I see dat she sufferin'; but she one o' de quiet kin' whah go on an' don' say much.

"All dis time Marse Frank an' Miss Katie comin' on fine. He stay at we-all's

a heap, 'cep' when he pa wuz in one o' he tantrums er wuz 'way fum home, fur he love Miss Gracie jes' laik she wuz he own ma, an' he know dat he pa ain' doin' right by 'er. Den 'bout a y'ar after de wo', Marse Frank ax de Marster fur Miss Katie, an' de Marster say dat he glad to hev sich a boy fur he son an' dat he raythe gi' Miss Katie to him dan to anybody he know, dough he cyahn' give 'im much wid 'er, he so po' now, what wid de wo' an' he losin' he niggers; an' Marse Frank say he don' warn nuttin' else, dat she wuth all de worl' to him. So de day wuz sot an' he git de license, while Miss Katie fix 'er clo'es, an' things go 'long so tell jes' a week befo' de weddin' wuz to be.

"Den, seh, dyah come a day dis nigger 'oon nuver furgit. De fambly hed jes' set down to dinner,—I wuz waitin' on de

table an' I see hit all,—when de do' bus' open an' in come Miss Gracie wid 'er hyah jes' flyin' an' 'er eyes blazin' laik dee wuz on fyah. She resh up to de Marster an' cry:

"'Daddy Torm, Daddy Torm, he done strike me; he done strike he wife!'

"An' wid de wu'ds she pull 'er dress open, an' dyah, on 'er fyah breas', wuz a gre't blue mark whah sum'n hed hit 'er. De Marster's face git hard an' tu'n white ez peth, an' he choke so he cyahn' say nuttin', but he jes' gadder 'er in he ahms an' she tell 'im how dat man been 'busin' 'er uver sence he come home; an' how he drink an' gamble wid dem mens, an' dat she hedn' say nuttin' tell dat day 'cause she love 'im so; but dat mawnin' she hed done fin' a letter layin' 'roun' fum some ooman in Richmon' whah he hed been gwine see, an' dat when she ax 'im 'bout hit he cuss 'er an' strike 'er wid he fis';

an' den de po' chile jes' lay dyah an' moan an' say:

"'An' I loved 'im so, Daddy Torm; I loved 'im so!'

"De Marster look laik a wil' man ez he stan' dyah, wid he han' clinch' roun' 'er, an' I see 'im shake laik a tree whah a quick win' done cotch an' ben' back an' fro. Den he say:

"'Emma, teck keer o' dis chile tell I come back; an' Jack, git meh horse, an' come wid me.'

"Den he hol' 'er to 'im fur a minute an' kiss 'er one o' dem long heart-kisses, an' den he put 'er down an' I see 'im go to he des' an git he pistol, an' I know what comin'. I gits de horses ez quick ez I could an' we mounts. Dee run, seh, laik dee know dee cyahin' jedgment, an' befo' I hed time to draw meh bref deep we wuz at de Cun'l's gate, an' dyah, front de

house, wuz de Cun'l hese'f. De Marster go right up to 'im an' say:

"'I'se come to kill yo', yo' damn houn'!'

"'Is yo', indeed?' he 'spon' ve'y cool, an' put he han' in he breas'. He nuver drawed hit out, seh, fur at dem wu'ds de Marster shot 'im, an' he fell all in a heap wid he heart-blood leapin' out over de parf. We wen' back home den, an' on de steps wuz Miss Emma, waitin'.

"'Hev yo' done hit?' she say, an' de Marster jes' nod he haid an' start by 'er. But she hol' to 'im an' say:

"'O Torm, how kin I tell yo'?—Gracie—' An' den she cry so she cyahn' say no mo'. But seem laik he know what she gwine say, an' he resh into de settin'-room, an' dyah, seh, layin' on de sofa, wid 'er face laik de snow an' a smile on 'er lips, her long gol'en hyah coverin' de

mark dat man hed meck, wuz Miss Gracie—daid!

"De doctor say dat 'twuz er heart hed fail, but I know dat hit broke.

"Dee 'rested de Marster an' try 'im fur murder, dough ev'ybody say hit wuz a was'e o' time an' dat dyah warn' a man on de jury dat wouldn't hev done de same thing; an' suah 'nuff, after I git up an' tell 'em how 'twuz fum de time Miss Gracie bus' de do' in to de time de Marster fin' er' daid, dee say he not guilty widout leavin' de room.

"Den, seh, de trouble begin—hit wuz wuss 'n wo' time. De Mistiss git mo' an' mo' poly, an' at las' tuk to 'er baid, an' de Marster go 'roun' all ben' over, laik a man whah cyahin' a big load on he back; an' he nuver say a wu'd 'bout hit to no one. I b'lieve Miss Katie suffer mos' ez much ez he did, fur of co'se Marse Frank nuver come no mo' after he pa done

killed, an' she love 'im so hit wuz laik tyahin' part of 'erse'f 'way. She ease 'er min', dough, by nussin' Miss Emma an' by doin' a heap o' good 'mong de folks whah lef', teachin' 'em de Bible an' to read an' write. I jine de chu'ch meh-se'f, an' ev'y Sunday I druv 'er dyah.

"Dis wen' on fur 'bout fo' mon's, an' den dyah come a evenin' when de Mars-ter an' Miss Katie wuz settin' out onder de trees an' I wuz weedin' de flowers, when somebody rid up in de yard. Hit wuz Marse Frank, seh,—he hed been in Richmon' all dis time,—an' he wuz lookin' laik a ghos', he so pale an' thin. He go up to de Marster an' he say:

" 'Gawd knows what 'tis to speak to de man whah kill meh pa, dough I know he wuz wrong; but I cyahn' stan' dis no longer, seh. Will yo' le' me take Katie home wid me?'

"Den all de Marster's pen' up feelin's bus' out, an' he say:

" 'I don' warn' no mo' of yo' blood in meh fambly, damn yo'! I mout hev to do some mo' killin'.'

"Marse Frank look laik he gwine strike 'im, but Miss Katie lay 'er han' on he ahm an' he stop. He jes' feas' he eyes on 'er fur a minute an' den he r'ar he haid back laik a horse whah mad 'bout hevin' to pull a big load up a hill, an' he say:

" 'An' yo', Katie?'

"She ain' say nuttin', she cryin' so; but he smile sad-like ez he tu'n 'way, 'cause he know dat oomans don' cry 'bout yo' less 'n dee love yo' mightily.

"De nex' night, after Jinny wuz up-sta'rs 'sleep, I wuz settin' in meh cabin thinkin' 'bout how bad things all wuz, when I heah a knock at de do'. I open hit an' dyah, 'fo' Gawd, wuz Miss Katie!

She tell me dat she hed dat evenin' receive' a letter fum Marse Frank beggin' 'er to ma'y 'im wherr or no, an' sayin' dat he die ef she don'; dat she hed show hit to de Marster an' dat hit meck 'im crazy-laik. He ax 'er den do she still love Marse Frank, an' she 'low dat she do. Den de Marster tell 'er dat ef she warn' ma'y de son o' de man whah breck her Aun' Gracie's heart, she no chile o' hisn, an' dat de sooner she go de better; an' dat when he see er' min' sot dat way, he fyah drive 'er out de house. She ax me den would I go over to Marse Frank's an' fotch him hyah, 'cause she did'n hev nobody but him now, an' den she begin to cry easy-laik, an' I tell 'er I sut'n'y would ef de Marster kill me fur hit. I slip out right easy—Jinny oon' wake tell day, dough, ef a cannon go off onder de baid—an' git a horse out'n de stable an' ride over to Marse Frank's, an' tell 'im

dat dyah wuz comp'ny at meh cabin whah hed call fur him. He nuver stop to ax who 'twuz, but tell me to git he horse while he fix some things he need, an' den we travel back fas' ez dem horses could run. Miss Katie wuz standin' at de do' o' de cabin, an' he jes' teck 'er in he ahms an' say:

"'Thank Gawd, I has yo' at las'!' Dee talk sort o' low fur a few minutes, an' den Marse Frank say to me:

"'Jack, yo' stay hyah wid yo' Mistiss; I be back pres'n'y.' Den he go out an' I heah 'im go off on he horse. Hit soun' laik he hed nurr horse wid 'im, an' I look out, an' suah 'nuff he leadin' mine 'long erhine 'im.

"'Name o' Gawd, what Marse Frank up to now?' I say to Miss Katie, 'quirin' laik; but she ain' 'spon', but jes' smile froo 'er tyahs, an' 'er eyes look laik big stars shinin' in de mis'.

"In 'bout a hour Marse Frank come back an' wid 'im wuz Mis'er Walker, whah he done fotch out'n he baid. Den I know what gwine happen, fo' dee oon' need a preacher fur nuttin' but git ma'yed. Marse Frank tell me to wake up 'Lilah (dat black chile o' Jinny's 'sleep in de back part de lof'), dat he warn' me an' her fur witnesses to de weddin'. So I gits 'Lilah an' Mis'er Walker he perceed.

"Hit sut'n'y wuz sweet to see dem two whah hed suffer so, gittin' de satisfaction-munt fur all dey trouble, an' I couldn' he'p drappin' a few tyahs on de flo'. 'Lilah, she cry too, 'cause she see me an' think dat de right thing to do. When Mis'er Walker finish we bofe meck a cross on de paper whah Marse Frank hed kep' layin' by so long, which he say wuz our marks, an' he write we-all's names

nex' de crosses an' tuck de paper in he pocket.

"After dee all gone I begin to git skeered, fo' I 'spec de Marster shoot me ef he fin' out what I done; but I feel better de nex' mawnin', fo' when I go up to de gre't-house wid much feah an' tremblin,' he nuver let on dat anything done happen, an' when I say sort o' innercent laik, 'Whah Miss Katie, Marster?' he face jes' git dark an' he say, 'Yo' 'll fin' out soon 'nuff, I reckon.'

"He nuver did know tell I tell 'im, who teck keer o' he chile dat night when he drive 'er out, ez 'Lilah hed de ve'y oncommon gif', dat is in a ooman, o' bein' able to keep 'er big mouf shet, an' dat cover a heap o' ugliness to my min'.

"Marse Frank an' Miss Katie jes' ez happy ez two lambs frolickin' 'roun' in de Spring, 'cep' dat she wuz allus hopin' dat her pa 'ud teck her back, an' feelin'

ve'y sorry fur him an' 'er ma dyah all 'lone; an' she writ 'im two er th'ee letters dat I brung over, but when he see who dee f'um he put em in de fyah widout readin' 'em.

"Den, fo' long time he so quiet an' look so bad dat I feared he gwine die; an' he talk so ramblin' sometimes dat I think he min' gittin' weak. De Mistiss mighty po'ly yit, an' she grieve so much 'bout Miss Katie dat seem laik she cyahn' git no better. But one day Mis'er Walker come an' he stay wid de Marster tell way late in de night, an' fum dat day dyah come a change in 'im. He brace up an' smile sometimes, an' he mo' laik hese'f dan he been sence Miss Gracie die. One evenin' I see de tyahs in he eye, an' when he obsarve dat I takin' noticemunt of 'im, he cough an' blow he nose loud an' say he hed a col'; an' de comin' Sat'd'y night when I teck some water to he chahmber,

I heah 'im talkin' to hese'f, an' I jes' crack de do' open an' I see 'im wid he haid down on de table laik he prayin', an' I go 'way.

"De nex' day wuz Sun'ay. Hit wuz de fus' Sun'ay in May, an' I 'members hit well, fo' hit wuz de happiest day dis nigger uver see. De mawnin' broke wid a red light in de eas', an' de sun riz up an' tetch de trees an' bushes tell dee spahkle laik dee wuz covered wid di'monds, an' hit tu'n de water in de river dyah all golden bright. De ve'y flowers all smile ez I wen' 'long up troo de gyahden fum meh cabin to de gre't-house, ez dough dee wuz tryin' to say, 'A happy mawnin' to yo', Unc' Jack.' I didn' hev much to be thankful fur, mo' dan de fac' dat I wuz still in de lan', an' dat I b'long to one o' de bes' famblys in de State,—less'n hit wuz dat de ole ooman wuz gittin' so bad wid de misery in 'er back an' laigs dat

she couldn' stir roun' after me so peart ez she used to,—but somehow I brighten' up cawnsider'ble, an' when I wen' in de Marster's chahmber an' meck meh bow, he 'low dat I lookin' youn'er an' han'-somer dan he hed see me fur ten y'ars.

"Hit do me good, seh, to heah 'im run on dat way, fur hit soun' laik de ole times come back, when me an' him use' to frolic an' hunt an' fish togerr an' he use' to devil me 'bout de gals. He sut'n'y wuz aggervatin' 'bout dat. Lawd, I kin heah 'im now. 'Jack, yo' 's a mighty han'some nigger; all de gals meckin' eyes at yo'. I see Jinny smilin' at yo' las' night, an' she won' look at none de res' de boys. Ef I wuz yo' I sut'n'y wud set up to 'er.' Dat wuz how I come to notice Jinny fus'—hit wuz all Marse Torm's fault. Of co'se I know dat he jes' foolerin' wid me now, fo' I knowed I warn' handsome no mo' wid half meh teef gone an' meh haid mos'

ez beah o' hyah ez a possum's tail. But what he say 'bout de gals repinin' fur me wuz sut'n'y true; but dat wuz long befo' Jinny ma'yed me an' tuk de ambitiousness outn me.

"'Thankee, Marster, same to yo',' I say; an' den he laugh an' say he don' b'lieve I uver gwine git pas' meh imperdence. Den I shave 'im an' bresh he long Prince A'bert coat, whah he got when he wuz 'broad dat time I done deluded to when de Pres'dunt sen' 'im to preach—*leastways to be a minister*, 'cause, 'fo' Gawd, I nuver did b'lieve de Marster suah 'nough preach dyah, he sw'ar too keen.

"Den I meck he toddy, after settin' one 'side fur mese'f, an' I wait on 'im at de table ez I hed fur y'ars. Jes' ez he finish he breakfus' he tu'n roun' sudden-laik an' say:

"'Jack, git de kerridge, I'se gwine to chu'ch dis mawnin'.'

"Well, seh, I wouldn' a been mo' s'prise' ef he'd tol' me he warn' gwine teck he toddy no mo', an' den I gittin' so stiff an' hit been so long sence I druv 'im I feared I done los' de lick. But I wen' out an' give de ole kerridge a washin' an' rub de horses down, an' druv 'roun' to de do' jes' ez he walk out lookin' solemn-laik.

"Den 'twuz I hed a persentimunt, I did fur a fac', dat som'n' gwine happen—an' b'lieve me, hit did. We wuz late gittin' to de chu'ch an' de preacher hed done come to whah he say, 'De Lawd be wid yo',' when we wen' in. De Marster didn' go up to de fambly pew, 'ca'se he sacerfice he pride any day 'fo' he'd 'sturb de worshup; an' 'sides, he hadn' been to chu'ch fur so long dat I reckon he feel kin' o' 'shamed, an' so he set down way back wid me right erhin' 'im.

"Well, dee sung awhile, an' den de preacher he pray an' de peoples pray back at 'im, an' den Mis'er Walker teck he tex' an' hit wuz, 'But I say to yo', love yo' enermies.' Dat man wuz a pow'ful preacher, an' he stir de peoples up jes' laik yo' stir milk wid a dasher; an' pres'n'y I see de Marster begin to shake quiet-laik, ez dough he cryin'.

"'Gawd,' I thinks, 'de Sperit done move 'im!' An' den I looks 'cross de chu'ch, an' dyah, way back, I see Marse Frank an' Miss Katie, an' I wonder ef dee thinkin' 'bout we-all an' ef dee know we dyah.

"Den de preacher stop an' 'vites all whah wish, to come to de bread an' wine, an' I gadders up meh hat 'spectin' de Marster to go out wid de chil'n an' dem whah couldn' furgive dey neighbors; but he set still, seh, an' I settle back an' say

to mehse'f, 'Yes, Lawd, de Sperit done got 'im suah.' De chu'ch git quiet den an' de peoples git down on dey knees.

"De light come in ve'y sof' troo dem painted winders, de organ play low an' solemn, an' de white figger down dyah by de cross inside de railin' go on axin' Gawd to bless de peoples an' to tu'n 'em fum dey sins fur de sake of Him whah die on de cross; an' when he come to dat place whah he ax de Lawd to 'cept us 'not weighin' our merits but pard'nin' our 'fences,'—which Miss Katie done 'splain to me mean dat we ax 'im to teck us fur jes' what we wuth,—I couldn' stan' hit no longer, seh, but fyah bus' out cryin'. De Marster tu'n roun' an' say:

" 'Don', Jack, don';' an' I see de gr'et tyahs in he eye.

"Den all de folks wen' up one after 'nurr an' tuk de bread an' wine tell dee wuz all troo 'cep' Miss Katie an' Marse

Frank an' two three urrs. Den *dee* goes up todes de railin', an' jes' ez dee start I heah de Marster say to hese'f, 'I cyahn' do hit, I cyahn' brek meh oath'; an' den, seh,—dough I dunno how 'twuz,—I feel som'n' teck hol' meh heart an' I ben' over an' say:

"'Go, Marster, go now an' furgive while yo' kin.' An' to meh dyin' day I'll nuver furgit how he face look ez he tu'n roun' to me an' say:

"'Well, come wid me, Jack.'

"I nuver stop to think how 't would look fur ole nigger to go up dyah wid de white folks (we alluz partakes when dee is troo, yo' know, seh), but I jes' gits up an' de Marster tecks meh ahm, fur he laig been bad ag'in lately, an' we start. Mis'er Walker seen us comin', an' dough Miss Katie an' Marse Frank wuz kneelin' dyah a'ready, he wait.

"De Marster kneel right down by de

side o' he chile an' me nex' 'im. When she notice who 'twuz, she start an' look at 'im kin' o' pitiful-laik, an' den she jes' lay 'er haid down on he han'. Dyah we wuz,—de young Mistiss, Marse Frank, de Marster an' dis po' nigger,—all kneelin' dyah togerr, an' de chu'ch so still yo' could a heahed a fedder drap.

"Den de preacher tell us 'bout how Chris' giv He body an' blood fur us, an' I heah he voice breck an' trimble, an' den we eat de bread an' drink de wine.

"De nex' thing I know we wuz all back in de fambly pew prayin', de young Mistiss still holdin' de Marster's han'. An' den I heah a voice whah soun' ez sweet ez a angel's say, 'De peace of Gawd dat pass' all understandin' be wid yo' all evermo';' an' I knowed dat hit would."

# FOR THE CHILD'S SAKE

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The night was perfect. From the vast dome of the sky above, thousands of stars looked down upon the quiet earth, bathing with their soft radiance forest and field and stream. A light breeze stirred in the pines, while from the thickets was borne the mournful cry of the whip-poor-wills. There were stars on earth too—hundreds of brilliant points which told of a sleeping host resting on their arms. The heat of the day, the weary march, the impending struggle were all forgotten and the soldier dreamed of other things—dreamed of loved ones far away; of the parting kiss the wife had pressed upon his lips; of the little hands that would have held him back; of the dear old mother sitting in her accustomed corner

of the vine-clad porch of the home he had gone forth to defend.

Fifteen miles to the east burned other camp-fires—the fires of the invading army. There, too, the soldiers dreamed of home; about them, also, played the voice of the wind in the trees; on them, as well, the quiet stars looked down.

* * * * * *

Along the level, sandy road which leads from Williamsburg to Yorktown a solitary horseman, dressed in Confederate gray, was slowly riding. In his fine, dark eyes there was a look of intense earnestness and determination, while the broad shoulders and well-knit limbs spoke of strength and endurance. A pair of large saddle-bags, apparently well filled, were fastened to the cantle of his saddle. He seemed to be a stranger to that part of the country, for at each fork of the road he stopped as though to take his bearings,

and several times asked of those whom he met, if he were in the right way to Yorktown.

Turning a sharp bend of the road just where it ran between high banks down to a little stream, he suddenly drew rein. Seated in the middle of the road was a little girl who seemed to be unconscious of his approach. He swung himself lightly from the saddle and advanced toward her.

"Good evening, my child," he said kindly, "what are you doing here alone?"

A pair of sweet blue eyes were raised to his, and with a surprised tone she answered:

"I'se makin' sand pies for my dollies. Don't you see?"

"Why, certainly," he said, "how stupid of me not to see. But why do you play in the middle of the road; aren't you afraid of being run over?"

"Dis sand is so pitty an' white," she replied, "my dollies likes dis sand a heap de best."

"And what is this dolly's name?" and he raised a rag doll with but one arm and features almost worn away, from a heap of sand set in a circle of broken glass and china.

"Dat one? Why, dat's Jinny Fitzhugh. She's de bestest dolly you ever saw. She don't never cry nor be bad when I puts her to bed."

"And this one?" he asked, touching a diminutive china doll, dressed in a bit of pink cheese cloth.

"Dat's de tiny baby," she replied. "She dot borned last Christmas in my stockin'. Why is so many babies born in stockin's—does you know?"

"I'm afraid I don't," he answered, smiling down at the serious little face;

"perhaps it's because a stocking is such a nice warm place."

"Maybe so," she said; and then, holding up another of her treasures for his inspection, she added, "Now, dis one's bad; she wuns away from me mos' ev'y day, an' I has to send Jeb Stuart after her."

"Jeb Stuart!" exclaimed the young man, "who is Jeb Stuart, I should like to know?"

"Why, he's my boy dolly; I lef' him at home," she added regretfully, "'cause he was tired yesterday wunnin' after dis bad one."

"Where *did* you get such a name for a dolly?" he asked.

"My papa named him for me," she replied; "you see he's in de army wiz General Stuart. Papa was sick an' dey let him tum home, an' he brought Jeb to me when he tame. But he's gone back now.

an' I lives wiz gran'pa an' gran'ma over yonder," and she pointed to a house, half hidden by the trees, about a hundred yards from the road. "I ain't dot no mama," she went on. "I use' to have when I was a baby, but she went away up yonder," and the blue eyes were raised to the blue above them.

The young man did not speak for a moment, but looked steadily into the child's face. He saw something there—the color of the eyes, the shape of the mouth—which took him back to the last Christmas spent with *somebody* at one of the old colonial homes on the James, and all his heart went out to the motherless little one.

"My mother is gone too," he said. "It's a bad thing to lose your mother, isn't it?"

"Yes, dat's what Jinny Fitzhugh said

de day she dot losted an' tudn't find me till suppertime."

He smiled in spite of himself. "But you haven't told me *your* name yet," he said inquiringly.

"My name? My name's Pocahontas. She was a Injun, but she was real nice, so papa named me her. Does you know 'bout her?"

"I believe I have heard of her," said the young man gravely; "but what did she do?"

"Doesn't you know? Well, I'll tell you. Dare was a man called Mr. John Smith, an' de bad Injuns taught him an' was goin' to till 'im, an' Pocahontas made 'em 'have deyselves an' let 'im go."

"That was nice of her, wasn't it? Well, Miss Pocahontas, I must bid you good-by for I have some way yet to go before dark. I hope the bad one won't

run away to-day, and that poor Jeb Stuart will be rested by to-morrow."

"Good-by," she said; "but where is you goin'? Don't you want to stay an' play dollies wiz me?"

"I wish I could," he replied, "but I'm going to see a gentleman named McClellan, or at least I'm going to see some of his friends if I can."

He laid a hand on his saddle as she spoke again. "I wish you'd tum to see me when you tums back, Mr.——"

"Page is my name; Jack Page, Miss Pocahontas, at your service. I wonder if you would give me a kiss before I go?"

The serious little face was raised to his, and he pressed a tender kiss on the child's lips.

"Good-by again, little girl; I'll stop when I come back—if I can," and he mounted and rode away. As his horse stopped at the stream to drink, he looked

back. She had gathered her dolls in her motherly arms and was slowly taking her way to her grandfather's house.

As he passed on down the sandy road the gravity of the situation came upon him more and more strongly as he thought of the possible consequences of his visit to "McClellan or some of his friends." While sleeping quietly by his camp-fire the night before he had been roused by an orderly from General Johnston's headquarters with the request that he report at once for special duty. A council of war had just been held at which his colonel, an old friend of the commanding general, had recommended him as the man for the dangerous duty that was to be performed. McClellan had been massing his troops for several weeks but a few miles below Williamsburg, and it had become necessary to learn their number and disposition, and also, if pos-

sible, the intended line of advance. General Johnston himself had explained the situation to him—the need of sending some one into the enemy's camp and the danger of the undertaking. Would he go? Not for a second had he hesitated. "General," he had answered, with all the impetuosity of youth, "I am ready; if I don't come back, you will know that I did my best."

Leaving camp about noon that day, he had ridden slowly, for he did not wish to reach the enemy's lines until nearly dark; but now he went on more rapidly for the sun was getting low. At last he turned from the road into a thick clump of pines, dismounted, and hitched his horse. It was Jack Page who went into the thicket; he who came out was another man—the rough jeans clothes, the stooping shoulders, and the shuffling gait spoke in an

unmistakable way the farm-hand of the poor-white class.

He rode slowly again until, at last, there came to his ears sounds which did not belong to the quiet of the pine forest; sounds which made the blood run faster and the hand grasp the bridle more firmly.

"Halt! who goes there?"

The cry startled him. There in a fence corner, by a big pine tree, stood a picket, dressed in blue, his gun half raised to his shoulder.

The countryman dismounted awkwardly.

"Good evenin', sir," he said with a drawl; "be you one er Mr. McClellan's men?"

"Yes," answered the picket, "I am. Who are you, and what do you want?"

"Me? Why, I'm Jim Harris—'Silly Jim,' some of 'em calls me, 'cause they

says I ain't right hard. But I don't hurt nobody, I don't. Could I see Mr. McClellan?"

The soldier laughed. "I guess not," he said. "But what do you want to see him for?"

The countryman grinned. "Well, yo' see I lives back here 'bout five mile, an' I raises a heap o' eggs an' fine chickens an' gyarden truck, an' I thought mebbe he'd buy some offen me."

The picket thought a moment. "You can't see the General," he said, "but I'll take you back to the officer of the guard. If he passes you in, you can see Captain Brown, and maybe you can trade with him. You don't happen to have any tobacco, do you, Jim?" he asked, as they turned from the road into a field.

"Oh, yes, I hev; I raises some mighty fine terbacco, an' I chaws a heap, I does."

He drew from his pocket a large twist

and handed it to the soldier. "Keep hit ef yo' like," he said; "I've got plenty mo' at home."

After a few questions the officer of the guard seemed satisfied. Pointing across the field to a number of tents pitched near the edge of the woods, he said: "You'll find the Captain over there, I guess."

Jim crossed the field slowly and approached a little group of soldiers who were playing cards near a fire, while others were preparing supper.

"Good evenin', gentlemens," he said, as he rode up and dismounted; "kin I see Capting Brown?"

"What do you want with Captain Brown?" asked one of the men. "Got any orders from headquarters?"

The newcomer seemed somewhat confused by the laughter which the question excited, and he answered in a stupid sort of way: "Not edzactly. I raises a heap

o' eggs an' fine chickens an' gyarden truck, I does, an' I thought mebbe he'd buy some offen me."

There was another laugh, and the soldier who had first spoken pointed to one of the tents. "You'll find him in there," he said.

"That's a mean trick, Bill," said another of the troopers. "Brown's mad anyway, 'bout them fellers that slipped out o' lines last night, an' he'll give that poor devil thunder. He don't strike me as havin' much sense."

But Jim Harris, unmindful of the interest he was exciting, shambled up to the officer's tent, and called out in a high-pitched, whining voice:

"Oh, Capting Brown, be yo' at home?"

Captain Brown was at home. In a moment he stepped out of his tent, with anger written on every feature; but before he could give that vigorous expres-

sion to his thoughts which the occasion seemed to demand, the countryman broke out with:

"Good evenin,' Capting Brown. I'm Jim Harris—'Silly Jim,' some of 'em calls me, 'cause they says I ain't right hard. But I don't hurt nobody, I don't. I raises a heap o' eggs an' fine chickens an' gyarden truck, I does, an' I thought mebbe you'd buy some offen me."

The Captain smiled in spite of himself at the queer figure before him. Eggs and chickens were none too plentiful in camp.

"Well, I guess you may bring me some. But you don't expect me to pay you for them, do you? Suppose I just send some of my men over, and let them help themselves?"

"Oh, Lordy, Capting, yo' wouldn't treat po' Jim thet er way, would yo'? I don't hurt nobody, I don't; I jest raises a heap o' eggs an'—"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Captain Brown; "but why do you come to us? Why don't you take your stuff to the rebel army?"

"I does, Capting. I wuz over thar day befo' yestiddy, but I heered some o' the men say thet Yankee money wuz wuth a heap mo' 'n ourn, an' I thought ez how I'd come an' see."

"So you were there two days ago," said the Federal officer, with scarcely suppressed eagerness. "I suppose you saw a good deal of the troops, eh?"

"Yes, sir; I seen a heap o' soldiers; one of 'em tol' me thar wuz most ten thousan' thar."

The officer's eyes sparkled with pleasure. Carelessly, however, he spoke again. "Well, I suppose they're having a good time of it with Jackson and Stuart both there?"

"No, sir, they ain't; 'cause they say

thet Jackson ain't come yit, an' they's afraid he cyarn' git thar from 'way over in the Valley for a week er mo'."

"Well, Jim, they're coming down this way soon, I suppose?"

A gleam of suspicion seemed to flash into the countryman's eye. "I dunno," he replied rather shortly; "but how 'bout them eggs an' chickens an' gyarden truck, Capting?"

"Well, I guess I'll take some," said the officer; and then he added: "You'd better get some supper before you go; it'll be dark before you get home."

"I don't care ef I do, Capting; I kin travel a heap better after I get some grub."

The officer turned to one of his men. "Get him some supper," he said; and then added in a whisper: "Keep him all night if you can; I want to question him again in the morning."

Jim Harris was soon at home with the little group around the fire, and proceeded to do full justice to the evening meal. He submitted to the good-natured bantering of the soldiers with an awkward grace, while his queer manner and quaint replies kept them in a roar of laughter.

Out in the west a dark cloud rose and slowly spread itself over the sky.

"It's goin' to rain," said one of the men; "you'd better stay all night, Jim, or you'll get wet and that might spoil your good clothes."

"I ain't afraid o' gettin' wet, but I b'lieve I'll stay. Hit's pow'ful dark, an' thar's a ghos', they says, thet walks 'roun' back thar near the cross-roads; hit mought git me."

"All right," said the soldier, "you can take some o' them rails an' make you a shelter in that fence corner. Here's a blanket for you, I've got another."

An hour later the camp was quiet. The night was intensely dark, though the storm seemed to have gone round. The fire had burned down to a few red coals, and no other light was to be seen save a faint glimmer from one of the officer's tents, fifty yards away. Around the fire the soldiers lay motionless, but up against the fence something was stirring. A dark form was drawing itself forward, creeping on hands and knees toward the tent where the light burned. Foot by foot the distance was covered, until, at last, the form lay close to the rear of the tent. Twenty yards away the sentry paced slowly up and down. From within came voices in earnest conversation. With every sense alert the man outside lay still and listened.

"Well, Colonel, I suppose everything is ready?" It was Captain Brown who spoke. "We march in two days?"

"Yes," was the reply; "the first division by the Yorktown road; the second over the new corduroy to the north; the third swings round and strikes Williamsburg from the south; with more than a hundred thousand men, we ought to be in Richmond in a week unless Jackson—"

"Jackson is in the Valley." It was the Captain who spoke. "This afternoon a half-witted countryman, offering to sell some eggs and chickens, came into camp. He was in the rebel lines two days ago, and he tells me that Jackson was not there."

A grim smile played over the face of the man lying so quietly outside the tent.

"A half-witted countryman, you say, Captain? Where is he now?"

"Spending the night in camp; afraid of ghosts on the road home this dark night, so one of the men told me."

"Perhaps so, and perhaps—"

"Perhaps what, Colonel? What do you mean?"

"I mean, Captain, that you cannot be too careful. He may be all right, and he may not. Better keep an eye on him."

"That's easily done. I'll put a guard over him to-night and I'll send some of the boys with him to-morrow—to bring back the chickens and eggs. If he's all right, well and good, if not—"

There was an abrupt pause. The figure outside drew back stealthily; back along the line of fence it crawled, back toward the corner of the fence it had left a few minutes before. Just as it reached the rail shelter and crept into the folds of the blanket, a soldier came up. He bent over the recumbent form and listened to the heavy breathing of the sleeper.

"No harm in him, I guess," he mut-

tered, as he stationed himself a few feet away.

In the east a faint light crept up into the sky. Slowly the clouds drifted away, and in a little while the moon rose over the quiet scene. For a long time Jim Harris lay there watching the sentry and wondering what the next day would bring forth. As he thought, a daring scheme evolved itself in his mind, and he smiled grimly again. At last he slept—slept and dreamed of somebody back in the old colonial home on the James.

* * * * * *

The day broke bright and fair. Horses were curried and fed, fires replenished, and the morning meal prepared. Jim Harris, seated on a pine stump, was the center of a good-natured group who joked him as they ate.

"That's a powerful good-lookin' horse

o' yours, Jim," said one of the troopers. "Where did you steal him?"

"I ain't no horse-thief," said the countryman indignantly; "I raised him myself. He's a mighty good horse, Billy is. He kin run all day, he kin."

"Well, how'll you swap? I'll give you mine for him and five dollars to boot."

"No, sir, I reckon not. There ain't many horses 'round here like him. He's Kaintucky stock, he is."

"But my horse can run, too. He can go a mile in two minutes."

"I reckon he'd go a mile in one minute ef Gineral Stuart wuz to git after you," said Jim, with a broad grin.

A shout of laughter at his questioner's expense greeted this sally.

"Better let him alone, Tom," remarked one of his companions; "he's got a darned lot more sense than he looks to

have. But how about them eggs an' chickens, Jim; did the Captain buy any?"

"He said as how he *guessed* he'd take some," answered Jim. "Thar he comes now. I reckon he's goin' to buy some offen me. I raises mighty fine eggs an' chickens an' gyarden truck, I does."

Just then Captain Brown, accompanied by another officer, walked up to the group. "Well, Jim," he said, "I'll take all the stuff you can spare. And Colonel Wilson would like some, too; he is very fond of chicken. By the way, you didn't happen to hear the other day if General Johnston was expecting us to move up his way soon, did you?"

"No, sir, not edzactly; but I heered some o' the men laughin' an' sayin' yo'-all wuz skeered of 'em, an' thet wuz why yo'-all wuz stayin' here so long."

Captain Brown and the Colonel exchanged glances. Then the former said:

"Well, Jim, I'm going to send some of my men with you as soon as drill is over, to bring the things back. That will save you the trouble of coming down again, won't it? The horses need exercise, too."

If Captain Brown had expected Jim Harris to demur at his suggestion, he was mistaken, for the countryman promptly replied: "All right, Capting, an' I'm much obleeged to you. I'll show 'em the pretties' little farm this side o' Williamsburg. Them horses does need exercise, Capting," he added, as he turned toward the place where some of the men were saddling up. "They're powerful fat; yo' all must feed a heap o' corn."

The Captain turned aside and called a big sergeant to him. "Take twenty men," he said in a low tone, "and go home with this man. If he's all right, buy some of his produce and pay him for it; if not,

bring him back—alive, if you can. You understand?"

The soldier nodded. "You think maybe he's—"

"I don't know; we can't afford to run any risks, though; be careful."

In about two hours the little party set out. They turned from the field into the road, Jim Harris riding in the rear between the big sergeant and another cavalryman.

The Captain turned to Colonel Wilson. "That fellow may be a spy," he said, "but I doubt it. If he is, he ought to be on the stage; he's too good an actor to stretch rope."

On up the road went the little troop, riding slowly. They had covered about four miles, when Jim, pointing to a neat frame house about two hundred yards back in a field, exclaimed: "Here we are, men! That's my house over yonder.

Ain't she a beauty? Turn right into thet lane thar," and he pointed to a little lane on their right.

They turned in at his direction, until only the big sergeant and Jim's other guard were left in the road. Suddenly a sharp cry rang out: "Back!" shouted the sergeant, "he's gone!"

With a vicious cut, Jim had laid his switch across his horse's flank. Like a wild thing the animal sprang forward. Lying low on his neck, his rider was urging him on in a mad race for freedom. "Go on, Billy," he cried, "go on, old boy! They'll never catch us!"

Close behind him, uttering yells of rage, came the troopers. A bend in the road hid him for a moment from their sight. Then he saw them again as he turned into a long, straight stretch. He had not boasted vainly of the speed of the

splendid horse he rode, and he laughed aloud as he saw that he was rapidly leaving them behind.

"Good boy!" he shouted, "good old Billy; we're going to make it; we're going to make it!"

Two or three shots from the men in front rang out, and the sand flew from the road beside him. In a few moments more he was out of range, and he began to breathe more freely again. But still he rode desperately, and still behind him thundered his pursuers. The road narrowed then, and ran down to a little stream, the stream where he had stopped the evening before to water his horse. He dashed through it and on around a curve between steep banks. As he did so a vision flashed on his sight which made his heart turn cold with horror. Seated in the middle of the road, with the light of the morning on her golden hair, sat the

child at play again with her dolls. To ride around her himself was easy enough —but what of the horsemen behind? They would be close upon her before she would be seen. His mind was made up in an instant. A word to his horse, a strong pull on the bit, and he was down. He lifted the frightened child, and with one swing of his powerful arms tossed her to the top of the high bank into a corner of the fence above.

"Stay there," he shouted, "horses are coming!"

As he mounted again, fierce cries came to his ears, and looking back he saw his pursuers rounding the bend. The big sergeant was riding in front, his bridle between his teeth, his carbine at his shoulder. A moment later there was a sharp report, and he felt his horse stagger under him. Another hundred yards and they were upon him, closing round

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just as Billy stumbled and threw him to the ground. In an instant he rose and faced them. The stoop of the shoulders was all gone, and his eyes flashed with a new light.

The big sergeant laid a hand on his shoulder. "You are my prisoner," he said sternly; "you'll have to go back with us."

The young man bowed. "I suppose so," he said bitterly.

With hands bound behind him he was placed upon a horse led by one of the troopers, and the little party turned their faces back toward the camp. As they rounded the bend again they came upon a child in the road, weeping over a doll which she held clasped tightly to her heart. As they drew near her grief broke out afresh. "You bad mens," she sobbed, "you has done wunned over my Jinny Fitzhugh, an' hurt her awful."

"Never mind, little girl," came a quiet voice from the midst of the troop, "she'll get well if you put her to bed and nurse her carefully."

The child looked up and her face brightened.

"Is dat you, Mr. Page?" she said. "Won't you det down an' help me fix my dollies' house; dose bad mens has b'oken it all up?"

It was the big sergeant who answered. "No," he said, "*Mr. Page* is going back to our camp." And then he added grimly: "He wants to sell the Captain some eggs and chickens and 'gyarden' truck, he does."

Jack Page bit his lip: "Enough," he said; "you've got me down, and you needn't rub it in."

Then something dimmed his eye. Somebody's face came before him—somebody whom he would never see

again. "Sergeant," he said huskily, "I want to ask a favor of you. This child is a little friend of mine. Hold her up here and let me kiss her good-by."

The big fellow dismounted. "All right," he replied, and his voice trembled a little; "I've got one of my own back in New Hampshire."

The child put both her arms round his neck and kissed him. "Good-by," she said. "You mus' tum back an p'ay dollies wiz me like you said you would."

He looked back as they crossed the stream: she was waving him a last farewell.

* * * * * *

It was evening. In the glowing west the sun, a red ball of fire, was sinking in a bank of purple cloud. Around a rough table a group of officers were seated, while at the lower end stood Jack Page, strongly guarded. There was no look of

fear in his fine eyes, however, as he raised them toward the setting sun, although for him too day was closing, and it would soon be eternity and night.

The court martial was brief. The judge-advocate read the charge—acting as a spy within the Union lines. Captain Brown, the big sergeant, and several of the troopers gave their testimony, and then the president of the court turned to the prisoner.

"Have you any defense to offer?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir, that could mitigate your sentence. I was simply doing what duty required of me."

The president looked at the officer of the guard.

"Remove the prisoner," he said sternly.

Ten minutes later the judge-advocate entered the guard-house. In his hand he held a paper. "It is a most unpleasant

duty," he said, "which I have to perform. I am to transmit to you the sentence of the court. It is that you be hanged at sunrise."

The young man started. "I had hoped," he said, "that it might not be that—that you might give me a soldier's death."

The officer bowed slightly. "I am sorry for you," he replied, "but you know the law."

He turned and opened the door. As he did so Jack Page looked out into the glowing western sky. He seemed to see there a pair of blue baby eyes which smiled upon him as in a benediction.

Two hours later a strange party rode up to army headquarters. It consisted of half a dozen troopers with the big sergeant at their head, while at his side rode a gray-haired man who supported on the saddle before him a little girl.

"A message for General McClellan from Colonel Wilson of the Third New Hampshire," the sergeant said to the orderly who stood outside the General's tent. The orderly took the letter and entered. In a few minutes he returned. "The General will see them at once," he said.

The commanding officer, with the letter in his hand, turned from his table as they were ushered into his presence.

"Be seated, sir," he said courteously; "my friend, Colonel Wilson, writes me that you have come into our lines asking to see me on a matter of life and death. What can I do for you?"

"General McClellan," said the old man simply, "I have come with this little girl to ask the life of a man who has been condemned by court martial to be hanged to-morrow morning as a spy."

"That is a strange request, sir, the life

of a spy. On what grounds do you make it?"

The old man told his story. He had gone to Williamsburg early that day to take some supplies to the Confederate army. On his return he had heard a strange tale from his little granddaughter, the child he had brought with him. While playing that morning with her dolls in the sandy road a horseman had dashed up and dismounted; had tossed her into a corner of the fence on top of the steep bank, and had then mounted and ridden on again. A moment later a party of horsemen, dressed in blue, had ridden at full speed around the bend, and by the time she had climbed down into the road again had come back bringing the first man with them. His hands were tied behind him, and they had told her that they were going to take him back to their camp.

The old man paused a moment and then added, his voice trembling with emotion: "General, you're not going to hang a man whom you would never have caught if he had not stopped to save this child's life?"

The General was silent a moment; then he turned to the little girl.

"My child," he said kindly, "did the soldiers see this man throw you out of their way?"

"No, sir," said the little one, "dey didn't tum till he was back on his horse an' widin' away. But dey hurt my poor Jinny Fitzhugh awful; dey wode wight over her, de bad mens did. You tan see how dey hurt her," and she held up her doll for the General's inspection.

He took the doll and examined her carefully. "I see," he said sympathetically, "they did hurt her dreadfully, and

they might have ridden over you, eh? What is your name, my child?"

"Pocahontas, sir," she answered.

"And what is the prisoner's name?" he said with a smile, turning to the old man. "It ought to be John Smith."

"No, sir, it is Jack Page; at least so he told the child when he passed her in the road yesterday on his way down to your lines."

"So you are old friends, eh?" said the General to the child.

"Yes, sir," she replied, "an' he said he'd tum back an' p'ay dollies wiz me. I wish you'd let him tum."

General McClellan turned to the old man again. "Do you know who it was that captured this man?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; it was the sergeant who brought us here."

"That will do," said the General. "I do not doubt your story," he added, "but

I must speak to the sergeant and also to some of my officers a little later. You must stay with us all night. The orderly will show you to a spare tent. Get the child to sleep as soon as you can, for if I am able to do anything we must be up early in the morning. And now send the sergeant in."

When the big fellow rode away at the head of his troopers he bore a message to the brigadier-general who had presided at the court martial: "Delay execution of spy to-morrow morning until you hear further from me," it ran.

* * * * * *

The day was breaking. There was an unusual stir in the camp, for the time of inactivity was over. To-day the army was to move on Williamsburg. But it was not the preparations for the start which most interested the men of Colonel Wilson's regiment. Before they

moved, one of those terrible scenes, possible only in time of war, was to be enacted before their eyes.

Through the long night Jack Page had tossed restlessly on his rude bed, his hands clasped helplessly together, his lips moving in silent prayer. At last a faint ray of light crept in through the little window. They would soon be coming for him now. At the thought his heart sickened within him, and a deathly pallor gathered on his brow. But it was only for a moment. They should never see him like this; he would show them how a brave man can die.

Tramp, tramp, tramp—faint at first, but every moment growing louder. They were close outside the guard-house now. Then the door opened and the officer of the guard came in. "Come," he said, "are you ready?"

With a firm step Jack Page followed

him out, and stood quietly with his eyes fixed on the ground. Then there was a sudden cry; a child's voice rang out sweet and clear: "Oh, Mr. Page, de General says you may tum home an' p'ay dollies wiz me."

She was in his arms in a moment more. What did it mean? Was he dreaming? He raised his eyes from the child's face, and there, close before him, he saw a little group of officers. Even as he looked, one of them dismounted and advanced toward him with outstretched hand.

"Permit me, Mr. Page," he said, "to shake hands with the man who yesterday endangered his life to save that of a little child. I can trust such a man, I am sure, not to reveal anything he may have learned while in our lines. You may go back to your command, and when you see General Johnston tell him that 'Little Mac' doesn't hang men like you."

# THE GHOST OF OAK RIDGE

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## I

About three miles east of the old town of Williamsburg, Virginia, lies the Oak Ridge Settlement. Before the war between the States it was part of a prosperous plantation owned by Judge William Berkeley, but the two armies, moving over it again and again in the Peninsula campaign, had laid it waste. Then came a forced sale, for the Judge had lost heavily by the war, and the land was taken up by worthless negroes and a low class of whites who lived in a hand-to-mouth way on the scanty produce of the worn-out fields.

The houses in the Settlement were in bad repair, and spoke eloquently of the utter worthlessness of their owners. In-

deed, had you visited Oak Ridge three summers before the year of the fever—the year when the voodoo mystery was solved—you would have found but one house which could lay any claim to respectability of appearance. This was a two-story cabin built near the summit of the slight ridge from which the Settlement took its name, and at a distance of perhaps half a mile from the main cluster of houses. A neat paling fence enclosed the little garden, and a well-kept gravel walk, edged with old-fashioned flowers, led from the gate to the front door; while the cabin itself had been newly shingled and whitewashed.

Here lived Uncle Ben and Aunt Charlotte, in other days house servants of the Berkeleys. At the sale, the Judge had bought in for them the cabin and enough, land for garden purposes, and here the two old people lived comfortably enough,

frequently helped by contributions of clothes and money from "de ole Marster." For years Uncle Ben had been as good natured an old darky as ever told stories to the children around the winter's fire; he had always led the dances at corn-shuckings and Christmas festivities, and so it was that all his worthless neighbors, black and white alike, were on the friendliest terms with him. But suddenly a great change took place in the old man. All his good nature disappeared, his visits to the Settlement ceased, and to his neighbors' greetings as they passed his cabin he answered in a muttering jargon that was meaningless to them. Sometimes the passerby observed him walking round and round a large kettle, under which a slow fire burned, chanting to himself meanwhile a weird incantation, and from time to time throwing into the kettle little bunches of herbs and bits of queer-looking flesh.

A change took place also in the house and its surroundings. Instead of flowers and climbing vines, half a dozen tall poles were set up, and from these dangled numbers of old bottles of all sizes and shapes, bunches of many-colored feathers, squirrel tails, streamers of rag and ribbon, strings of buckeyes and bits of colored glass. The windows and gables of the house were ornamented in like manner, the whole effect being curious in the extreme. A lame calf and a deformed pig sprawled about on the little grass plot before the house, while a large black cat with only one eye was often seen at the old man's heels. And worse still—the woods at the back of the house began to be haunted by the figure of a woman in white, a figure that had been seen at different times by at least a dozen people. And so it did not take the Settlement long to make up its mind that Uncle Ben

was possessed of an evil spirit and had taken to voodooism.

The old man's friends deserted him at once. Not for untold wealth would one of them have entered his house even by daylight. Children who wandered near it ran screaming home when the old man approached them, and once a stranger, who had stopped to ask his way, told afterward in the Settlement that he had heard a weird, crying sound in the cabin like the sobbing of a child.

The matter, of course, reached Judge Berkeley's ears, and on one or two occasions he dropped in on the old man to see if he could find out anything that would lead to a clearing up of the mystery. But Ben's reply was always, "'Tain' no use, Marster, I jes' cyahn' he'p it; an' ef hit's all de same to yo', I'd ruther yo' woudn' come down hyah, 'ca'se hit meck me feel so bad."

And so the Judge gave it up, and for nearly two years old Ben was left to himself.

Then came the drought and with it a pollution of the water supply, and the fever broke out,—typhoid in its worst form,—a spiteful, wasting fever that found easy lodgment in the cabins of Oak Ridge. Victim after victim it claimed, until the wretched people became panic-stricken. There were no nurses, no delicacies, nothing but suffering, disease, death. And through it all George Berkeley, the Judge's only son, rode night and day like an angel of mercy, to do what medical skill could do for these suffering creatures.

## II

For three months now the fever had raged, and Dr. Berkeley, riding one afternoon along the sandy road that led from

Williamsburg to the Settlement, felt keenly in his heart the despair which follows unsuccessful though persistent effort. Was his treatment correct? Were there means he knew not of for combatting the disease? Would not some one else have been able to do more?

Asking himself such questions as these, he approached the house of Sam Williams, an ignorant, superstitious negro, whose youngest child was desperately ill. He entered without knocking, to find the room empty save for the sick child that tossed restlessly on a low pallet in one corner. He had barely time to wonder what this meant, when he heard some one talking at the back of the cabin, and in a moment he recognized Sam's voice:

"Dyah ain' no doubt 'bout it 't all; we done got all de evidence we needs. Dis hyah fever wuz started by dat damn

voodoo, Doc' Ben, ez he call hese'f. Doc' Berkeley needn' tell me nuttin' 'bout hit bein' in de water, fo' I knows better. Ain' my cow dies lahs summer jes' 'ca'se she git in he gyarden? Ain' John Bascome break he laig de ve'y day he meet Ben in de road? Ain' dat ghos' alluz ha'ntin' dem woods back o' he house, an' ain' de fust two whah die wid de fever dem li'l' chillen o' Buck Henry's whah he meet one day in de woods an' tech 'em an' say, 'I wish I could tek yo' home wid me'? What he wan' dem chillen fur yo' s'pose? I b'lieve he gwine kill 'em. Ain' ev'ything go wrong in de Settlement uver sence he tuk to voodooin'? No, seh, hit no use talkin'—ef dis chile o' mine die, I'se gwine git up a crowd an' lynch 'im. Dyar's plen'y 'll go."

Then Dr. Berkeley heard a woman break out wildly:

"An' ef yo' mens ain' got de grit,

dyah's 'nuff oomens hyah to hang 'im, an' dee' 'll do hit too."

And then came a voice that sounded like Tom Simpson's, the worst character among the white men of the ridge:

"You women needn't bother; I reckon we can 'ten' to the matter. I'd like to know what he's got in that cabin o' his, anyway."

Then retreating footsteps were heard and the next moment the mother entered the room. She explained in a confused way that she had been over to a neighbor's for something needed, and then she took the medicine from the doctor's hand.

"I don't think there will be any change before to-morrow," he said as he walked to his horse. "When it comes, though, we shall know something definite, for better or worse."

Another visit took him several miles into the country below Oak Ridge, and it

was nearly ten o'clock when he turned back into the main road just west of the Settlement. He might have enjoyed the beautiful night had it not been for the great weight upon his mind, but as it was he rode along gloomily enough. Suddenly, near the outskirts of the town, his horse stopped, wheeled half around, and stood quivering with fright. And looking up, George Berkeley saw the figure of a woman, dressed in white, flit across the road about a hundred yards before him and enter the woods on the left. "The ghost of Oak Ridge!" he muttered. "Pshaw!—I'm getting nervous from this strain. But why should the mare have started so?"

And with a touch of his spur he put the animal into a gallop that quickly brought him home.

## III

A full moon rising almost red in the hazy, Indian-summer air, shed its light upon the road that ran from the Oak Ridge Settlement, first through a piece of dense woods and then between open fields up to Uncle Ben's cabin. The only sounds that broke the stillness were the hooting of an owl, the mechanical notes of the katydids, and the occasional howling of a dog. Down in the Settlement the lights gradually went out, and you might have thought that there, too, all was at rest. But look again. What is that long, dark line that winds along the lower road, that enters the woods, that comes out again on the upper side? Stealthily, silently, it moves along between the fields, keeping in the shadows of the cedars which line the fence row. As it comes nearer you can see the sepa-

rate figures that make up the line, and as they cross that bit of brightly lighted road you can count them: three, five, seven, ten, twelve, sixteen, twenty. Men travel thus only when some wild and wicked purpose animates them, when murder fills each heart. At last they halt within a hundred yards of the voodoo's cabin and a whispered consultation takes place.

In a few moments three of them step out from the crowd and move toward the house, two of them carrying axes and the third a rope. At the gate they pause a moment as if to gather courage to pass the enchanted ground. Then there is a rush, a heavy beating on the door, a window raised above them, and a voice:

"W'at yo' wan'? W'at de trouble down dyah?"

It is Sam Williams who answers:

"We wan' *yo'*, an' dyah'll be trouble 'nuff I reckon w'en yo' comes down."

There is a pitiful pleading in the voice of the old voodoo as he replies:

"Now, mens, don' do nuttin' to trouble Doc' Ben; he ain' nuver bodder yo'; go on 'way an' ten' to yo' own business."

There is an angry cry from the party below and a pine torch is quickly lighted.

"Now come out o' that or we'll burn you out!" shouts one of the white men.

"No yo' won'; voodoo house won' burn," answers Uncle Ben bravely. "Yo' better go 'long or de ghos' 'll git yo'."

The words were hardly spoken when a cry rang through the house, a cry that sounded at first like a child's, but which grew in a moment until it filled all the cabin; a cry so weird, so wild, so horrible that the attacking party fell back to the gate and waited there almost breathless. And then the door swung slowly

open and a figure draped in white, with face like the snow, with flowing hair and slowly waving arms, stood upon the door step before them all. With a yell of terror they fled, stopping only when the spot where they had left their companions was reached. Here they paused a moment, and looking back they saw the ghost float out of the house and pass away along the western road, and then the whole party crept back into the shadow of the woods.

So badly frightened were most of them that nearly an hour passed before the leaders could persuade them to try again. At last, however, Tom Simpson and one or two others, by dint of threats and reproaches and by a plentiful use of whiskey with which they were well supplied, got them together for a second attempt. This time the whole party advanced to the attack. Again the beating

on the door and again the voice from above, "W'at yo' wan', men? Go 'long 'way from hyah an' don' trouble Doc' Ben."

But maddened by the remembrance of their repulse and by the whiskey they had drunk, the lynchers waited for no further parley, but surged against the door, which easily yielded. With a rush they were up stairs in a moment, and there, against the wall, they saw by the torch's glare the old man standing like a wild thing at bay, while on the bed at his side—oh, God! what did it mean?—with the awful stillness of death upon her, lay a little girl—and the child's face and hands were white.

For a moment the lynchers stood astounded and silent, and then Tom Simpson spoke:

"You damned old villain, what's this?

Where did that little girl come from? What are you doin' with 'er here? What killed 'er?"

"Hit's all right, seh, hit's all right; I'se jes' been keepin' cyah o' her fur—fur somebody, an' she's hed de fever an' she on'y die erwhile ago. She ain' col' yit."

"You lie, you killed her! Where did you get 'er? Whose child was she?"

"I cyahn' tell yo', 'fo' Gawd I cyahn'! but hit's all right, mens; hit's all right."

"All right, is it? We'll see about that; bring him along, fellers, mebbe he'll talk when he gets the rope round his neck. And you," he added turning to Aunt Charlotte, who was crouching in a corner, "stay here till we come back, and if we find out that you had anything to do with it, we'll hang you too."

With a wild cry the old woman threw herself toward him.

"Yo' don' mean hit, seh, yo' cyahn' mean hit; yo' wouldn' hu't meh ole man; he don' mean nuttin' by all his voodooin'; hit's all right, de chile b'long hyah. Oh! my Gawd! don' tek 'im 'way laik dat; don', don', he ain't—" But Tom Simpson struck her down with a blow of his fist just as old Ben, with the rope already around his neck, was hurried from the room.

## IV

Judge Berkeley sat in his library before a blazing wood fire, and looked with wearied intentness at the flames which brought out strongly the deep lines that care and heartache had written upon his handsome old face. Nearly sixty years had passed since he, a little child, had sat in this same place and built fairy castles in the glowing embers, and dreamed day dreams as the evening came

on. Alas! for the child's dreams, for he had found life a weary struggle, and now he was facing the end almost alone.

The wife had gone first,—the tender, loving wife who was always the same to him, always his help and comfort,—and with her death a great emptiness had come into his life. And then his daughter had gone—not died, ah no! but gone away from him, perhaps forever. And there among the blazing logs her face grew distinct, her face as he had seen it last, proud, defiant, beautiful. All unheeded the hours passed by, until, long after the clock had struck ten, a step on the stair aroused him from his reverie and the next minute his son entered the room.

"Well, father, I was down at the Oak Ridge Settlement this afternoon," he said, speaking slowly and brokenly as one speaks of unpleasant things.

"And how is the fever?" asked the elder man.

"Worse than ever," was the reply; "two deaths yesterday; medicine doesn't seem to break it at all. I shall lose my reputation if this thing keeps up. But there is something worse than the fever down there."

"Worse than the fever?" repeated his father in an incredulous sort of way.

"Yes, much worse," returned the young man warmly, "and it's something that concerns both you and me closely—you as a judge of the district—both of us as law-abiding citizens. There is danger of a lynching down there, unless we do something to-morrow to prevent it, and the victim will be poor old—"

The sentence was never finished, for at that moment the door was thrown violently open and a cry as of a hunted thing filled the room. Father and son

sprang to their feet and saw standing before them, her hair loose upon her shoulders, her hands outstretched to them, a woman dressed all in white.

For a moment she stood thus, and then, "Oh, help!" she cried, "my baby is dying and the lynchers are after Uncle Ben! Your horses, quick, or it will be too late!" and then dropped in a heap upon the floor.

## V

Under a large tree, with his hands tied behind him and with the cruel rope around his neck, Uncle Ben stood facing his enemies, who, mad with drink, scowled upon him and cursed him as the cause of all their troubles. At last all was ready and Tom Simpson spoke:

"Now then, we're goin' to hang you, and if you've got anything to say about that child, make it short!"

A slight shiver, though not of fear, shook the old voodoo's body, then he spoke—spoke slowly, as if trying to gain time:

"Well, mens, yo' all 'members meh young Mistiss—Miss Marg'et, an' yo' know how sweet she wuz an' how she use' to come down hyah to see me an' 'er mammy. But she proud, too, an' laik to hev 'er own way jes' laik 'er pa; an' so, when he fo'bid dat young man de house, whah hed come to town 'bout three mon's befo' an' hed tuck sich p'tic'lar notice o' Miss Marg'et uver sence, an' whah nobody didn' know nuttin' 'bout—she jes' up an' run 'way wid 'im.

" 'Bout a y'ah pahss, an' den one night I heah a knock at de do' o' meh cabin. I open hit, an' dyah, 'fo' Gawd, wuz a ghostess, all dress' in white, an' I mos' drap I so—"

"Sh! what's that?" exclaimed Sam Williams.

A sound came to their ears through the still night—a sound such as a muffled drum beaten rapidly might make. It seemed to be somewhere on the other side of the strip of heavy woods which lay between them and their homes. As they listened it grew fainter and fainter until at last it died away.

"Hurry up," said Tom Simpson uneasily, "this here ain't no picnic party."

"Well, seh," the old darky went on, "hit wuz Miss Marg'et; an' what yo' reckon? De man she hed done run off an' mah'y hed anurr wife all de time. Miss Marg'et fin' hit out one day an' she lef' 'im. She too proud to go back to 'er pa, so she come to 'er mammy an' Unc' Ben.

"Den she play ghos' an' I tuk to voodooin' so ez to keep folks 'way f'um de

cabin; an' time we got 'em all skeered, de baby wuz bo'n. We ain' need no doctor, 'ca'se Charlotte a reg'lar lady's nuss an' she bring Miss Marg'et thoo all right. Hit sut'ney wuz pitiful to see de way meh young Mistiss love dat baby. Hit didn' hev no daddy, but she love hit all de mo' on dat recount, I think. Well, hit grow fine fur mo' dan two y'ar an' den hit ketch de fever. We done all we could, but 'twarn' no use, an' so, to-night, Miss Marg'et meck up her min' to go an' git her brurr to come an' see de po' li'l' baby. Yo' see, she hed done furgit herse'f an' all de shame she hed suffer 'ca'se her chile so sick. An' she wuz jes' startin' when she heah yo' all comin' de fust time, an' she skeer yo' off. De baby mus' 'a' been wuss dan we thought fur hit die in Charlotte's ahms befo' Miss Marg'et been gone er half hour.

"An' den yo' all breck in de house an'

dreg me out hyah. An' ef yo'se boun' to hang me, I'se ready; but don' hu't de ole ooman no mo'. Leave her wid de chile till Miss Marg'et come; she say she oon' be long"—this wistfully, almost hopefully. "Now I'se done, an' what I'se tole yo' is de Gawd's troof."

The old man stopped and looked piteously at his captors. But there was no sympathy in those drunken, glaring eyes; no drawing back of those hands eager for his blood. He had hardly spoken the last word when three or four of them began to pull upon the rope, and in a moment, with a horrible, gurgling sound, the old voodoo's body rose in the air, twisting and turning as the rope straightened. With yells and curses they gathered round the quivering form.

Suddenly there came a measured sound of horses' hoofs striking the ground, faint at first, but in a moment growing loud;

a gleam of pistols in the moonlight; Judge Berkeley's voice ringing clear and loud: "Hold, you cowards, or we'll shoot you down!"—and then two riders urged their panting horses among the lynchers, who scattered in all directions; while a third, a woman all in white, sprang to the ground, and threw herself upon the now prostrate but still breathing body of the man at once her slave and savior.

Still the moon floods the Oak Ridge Settlement with her soft light and outside the voodoo's cabin all is peace again; within, a mother bends in awful agony over her dead and nameless child; but the strong arm of her father is around her, and as the night wears on she turns to him as in the old days, and, like a little child, sobs out her pain upon his breast. And then the old man with the black face and the white soul, who has so nearly suf-

fered death because of his great love for his fair young mistress, crosses the room to her side and says with a trembling voice:

"Yo' mus'n' worry no mo', Miss Marg'et, fur hit's all right now. Yo' pa done got yo' back ag'in an' de baby restin' wid de good Lawd, 'ca'se He know dat hit bes' fur de li'l' gal not to stay hyah."

And Margaret Berkeley speaks no word, but thanks him with a look from her beautiful eyes, into which a great and lasting peace has come.

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